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Study Finds Postpaid Entry Prices Rising as Small Mobile Plans Disappear

A new study from global telecom data provider Tarifica finds that small, low-cost postpaid mobile plans are disappearing in a number of markets, pushing up the minimum amount consumers must spend for postpaid service.

Using data from Tarifica's Telecom Pricing Intelligence Platform (TPIP), the study compared the cheapest standard consumer postpaid plans across 44 markets between Q2 2025 and Q2 2026. The entry price increased in 18 markets.

The most significant finding is what caused those increases. In 11 of the 18 markets where the entry price rose, the previous cheapest plan was withdrawn from the market. Rather than simply charging more for the same service, operators have frequently eliminated smaller plans, leaving larger and more expensive plans to become the new entry point for postpaid service.

"We're seeing a subtle but important shift in the postpaid market," said Soichi Nakajima, Tarifica's Vice President of Data and Analysis. "Consumers are often getting more data for only a modest increase in price, but the small plan that allowed them to keep their monthly spending to a minimum is disappearing."

Switzerland illustrates the trend. Swisscom's 1.5GB Mobile XS plan at CHF 29.90 is no longer available, leaving Sunrise's 6GB Swiss Connect Lite plan at CHF 34.90 as the cheapest postpaid option in the market. Consumers at the entry point now receive more data, but the minimum monthly cost of postpaid service has increased by about 17%.

Japan saw an even more pronounced change following the withdrawal of docomo's low-cost irumo range. The cheapest postpaid plan available in the market moved from JPY 550 to JPY 1,078, an increase of 96%, without an operator raising the price of a plan it continued to sell.

Across the markets where entry prices increased, this pattern generally resulted in consumers receiving at least as much data for their money. The new cheapest plan included more data in ten of the 18 markets and the same amount in seven. The median increase in the postpaid entry price was approximately USD 2.92 per month.

The result is a market that can simultaneously offer better value and a higher minimum cost of entry. For consumers who want more mobile data, the shift may represent an improvement. For light users, second-SIM customers and others primarily interested in minimizing their monthly spending, it can mean paying more for data they may never use.

“Price per gigabyte doesn’t tell the whole story about affordability,” Nakajima said. “For some consumers, the most important question is simply how little they can spend and still have postpaid service. Our findings show that in a meaningful number of markets, that minimum commitment is moving higher as smaller plans disappear.”

Tarifica concludes that the minimum cost of postpaid service deserves to be tracked separately from traditional measures such as average prices and cost per gigabyte. If the disappearance of smaller plans continues, consumers may increasingly receive more mobile data for their money while having fewer opportunities to purchase genuinely low-cost postpaid service.

//Staff writer